

F. C. Bogk House  
2420 North Terrace Avenue (east side  
of North Terrace Avenue between  
North Wahl and East Bradford Avenues)  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee County  
Wisconsin

HABS No. WIS-252

HABS  
WIS,  
40-MILWA,  
15-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## F. C. BOGK HOUSE

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WIS,  
40-MILWA  
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Location: 2420 North Terrace Avenue (east side of North Terrace Avenue between North Wahl and East Bradford Avenues), Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

Present Owner and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Elsner, Jr.

Present Use: Residence

Statement of Significance: A handsome design that is well-constructed and well maintained, this house is the best of Frank Lloyd Wright's few early buildings in Milwaukee County, and an excellent example from the "Japanese" years of his career.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1916-17. Bogk purchased the lot from Charles L. and Jane M. Blanchard in November, 1915, and applied for a building permit (No. 11585) on August 18, 1916. By September of that year the foundation had been finished, and by late September, 1917, the house was all but complete.
2. Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright
3. Original and subsequent owners: The residence was built for Frederick C. Bogk and after his death in April, 1936, it belonged to his widow Katherine. The executors of her will sold the house to Joseph and Ann E. Pokorny in 1954, and one year later the Elsners bought it.
4. Builders and suppliers: They are not listed on the building permit, and recent efforts to learn their identities have met with little success. It is known, however, that the hardware was supplied by Builders Hardware Co. of Milwaukee, and it may be assumed that the paint came from the Bogk family firm, the Ricketson Mineral Paint Works, of which F. C. Bogk was secretary-treasurer in 1916-17.
5. Original plans: Most of the working drawings are stated to be on file at Taliesin West. The Elsners have prints of twelve sheets, including three plans, elevations,

sections, and several details. They also own three pencil and wash perspective studies by Wright, two of them (exterior and living room) apparently reflecting the architect's original conception for the house, the third one, an exterior, more closely resembling the residence as built.

6. Alterations and additions: All changes in the fabric have been relatively minor ones. Building permits, which may be incomplete, record no alterations until the mid-1950s. During the brief tenure of Joseph Pokorny, according to Mrs. Elsner, the bathroom near the main entry was created (in a space originally used as a closet). Since the Elsners purchased the house, it has undergone careful remodelling and redecoration, directed by Mrs. Frank Lloyd Wright and Taliesen Associated Architects of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. The still-unfinished project has thus far seen: repairs to the exterior; creation of a new entrance off the south alcove, main level (a door replaced the original window in this area); recarpeting and repainting of the living and dining areas; installation of several valances and changes in the lighting fixtures in these areas; addition of a built-in bookcase in the passage between dining area, foyer, and kitchen; remodelling of the kitchen (new cabinets and flooring); installation of several valances and ceiling lights on the second story; and installation of a guard railing at the top of the rear stairway, second floor. It may be noted here that the original carpeting and draperies, still in the house when the Elsners bought it, are now stored in the attic, and that when they acquired the house, it also had some of the original Wright-designed furnishings (chairs, stools, a desk), which they have retained. Other furnishings (dining room furniture and several chairs) now belong to the Bogks' daughter, Mrs. Carlton Bolles of East DePere, Wisconsin.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Frederick C. Bogk was well known in Milwaukee business and political circles during the early decades of this century. Born in Sheboygan Falls, he came to Milwaukee as a child and after completing his education, worked for the Wisconsin Central Railroad, rising to the position of land commissioner. In 1908 he joined the Ricketson Mineral Paint Works and later became president of the company. For a time he also had an interest in Bogk and Pfleger, an insurance and real estate firm. He was

elected alderman from the fifteenth ward in 1904 and after serving two terms, was elected alderman-at-large, a position he held from 1908 to 1920.

In 1968 the house was designated a Milwaukee Landmark by the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: As yet, none have been located.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Building permits and other records, 1916-68, General Office, Inspector of Buildings, 1010 Municipal Building, Milwaukee.

Inspection of the house and interview with Mrs. Robert Elsner, July 8, 1969.

Ottenheimer, John (Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation), letter to the recorder, July 16, 1969.

Records of ownership, Records and Research, 509 City Hall, Milwaukee.

Wright, Frank Lloyd, letter to Robert Elsner, Jr., September 19, 1955 (in the Elsner's collection).

b. Secondary and published sources:

"Ex-Ald. Bogk Dies on Street," Milwaukee Journal, April 10, 1936, Section 2, 1.

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Madison: 1967. 147, 148.

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Tselos, Dimitri. "Exotic Influences in the Architecture  
of Frank Lloyd Wright," Magazine of Art, XLVII, No.  
4, April, 1953. 167-68 and Fig. 21.

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Historians, XXVIII, No. 1, March, 1969. 59 and Fig. 4.

Wijdeveld, H. T. The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright. New  
York: 1965. 96, 97, 163, 164.

3. Likely sources not yet investigated: At this writing, the recorder has been unable to find contemporary newspaper stories (if any) on the house and to reach the Bogk's daughter, Mrs. Bolles, who may well have information on the structure's early history.

Prepared by Mary Ellen Wietczykowski  
1111 North Astor Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
August 5, 1969

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This house was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and executed under his supervision. It was built in 1916-1917, in the so-called Japanese years of Wright's career. The building has been designated a Milwaukee landmark.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent. The present owners have undertaken some restoration and minor remodelling. This work has been done with the assistance and guidance of the Taliesen Associated Architects.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The house is a two-story masonry building. The main portion of the house is rectangular with a rectangular east wing. It measures 47 feet (including the projecting dining room alcove) x 76 feet 6 inches in length.
2. Foundation: Concrete.
3. Wall construction, finish, color: The wall material is a tan tapestry brick and trimmed with precast concrete. The brickwork has wide, raked horizontal mortar joints and tinted and filled vertical joints. The building presents typical Wright details in the strong horizontal lines, geometric patterns, deep-set windows, and wide overhanging eaves. The lintels, sills, and capstones are precast concrete. The wooden windows and trim are painted a "Wright red."
4. Structural framing: Bearing wall construction.
5. Porches, steps, terraces, and balconies: The living room opens onto a tiled deck surrounded by a brick wall with precast concrete capping. A concrete stoop and steps have been added to the dining room alcove giving access to the south side yard. On the second floor, opening off the south bedrooms, is a small concrete balcony with brick walls having precast concrete capping. This is located above the dining room alcove.
6. Chimneys: One large rectangular chimney on a north-south axis rises between the living room and dining room. The chimney itself has been corbelled out in the attic space to give the massing desired on the outside of the building.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The entry doorway on the north side has a slab door with three parallel rectangular lights. The doorway is protected by a cantilevered precast concrete canopy. A new door, wooden with a large single light, leads from the dining alcove to the side yard on the south. The back door is also located on the north side of the building and has a single light. Wooden French doors with a large single light open onto the living room terrace. The doors are framed with narrow lights and have a transom light with geometric patterned glass that extends up to the ceiling. Most of these doors have been caulked shut.

- b. Windows: The windows are wooden casements having single lights. There are also fixed units of geometric patterned leaded glass combining white flashed glass, gold glass and black glass. In the stairwells are typical Wright slot or tall narrow windows.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Hip roof, 4 in 12 pitch, with greyish-green shingle tiles. The east wing containing the garage has a built-up felt roof. Copper gutters and downspouts are used throughout.
- b. Cornices, eaves: The house has wide overhanging eaves with plaster soffit and wooden fascia.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: The house has a full basement with mechanical equipment, laundry room, recreation room, and storage. The entry vestibule is at grade level and has a newly added powder room beneath the front stairs leading to the second floor stairs. From this level a short flight of steps leads up to the living room level which occupies the entire width of the west front of the house. Three steps above the living room is the dining room in the southeast corner beyond a central fireplace. The kitchen is on the east. Opening off the remodelled kitchen are the back stairs, basement stairs, and pantry. The garage is in the rear wing beyond the kitchen. The second floor has a maid's room and bath in the wing to the east above the garage, a bedroom on the east above the kitchen, a bedroom and bath in the northeast corner, a large bedroom with a fireplace in the southwest corner, and the master bedroom and bath above the dining room. A door between these last two bedrooms opens onto the balcony on the south side of the house above the dining room alcove.
- 2. Stairways: A short flight of steps leads from the west side of the entry vestibule up to the living room level, and another short flight leads from the living room to the dining room level. Two stairways lead to the second floor, the front stairs which are on the east of and adjacent to the entry vestibule, and the rear or servants' stairs which are beyond the kitchen.
- 3. Flooring: The entry vestibule is covered with hexagonal 2" x 2" ceramic tile varying in color from tan to yellow. The remainder of the house has hardwood floors throughout.

except for the dining room which has rectangular 1" x 2" brown tile and the bathrooms which have hexagonal tiles. Carpets now cover most of the wooden flooring. When the kitchen was remodelled, linoleum was installed.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are exposed brick in parts, and otherwise plaster, except for a painted wood soffit in the dining room and living room and decorative wood stripping on some other walls. The bathrooms have 4-1/2" square ceramic tile wainscoting.
5. Doorways and doors: The doors have one large panel. The trim is composed of built-up rectangular pieces of gum wood.
6. Hardware: Brass
7. Lighting: Electric. Additional lights were recessed into the soffit of the dining room and living room during re-modelling.
8. Heating: Central.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces west-northwest on North Terrace Avenue just two blocks west of Lake Michigan. The buildings in the neighborhood are of the pre-1930 era with the noted exception of a non-descript duplex just south of the Bogk house. The small lot is typical of those in the block.
2. Walks and enclosures: The driveway and entry walk are on the north side of the building. Squared tiles set in the concrete driveway define the entry way. A fence encloses the back and side yards.

Prepared by John N. DeHaas, Jr.  
Supervisory Architect  
National Park Service  
August, 1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the 1969 Milwaukee Project which was sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, and the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission of the City of Milwaukee, Richard W. E. Perrin, Chairman. The project was done under



the direction of James C. Massey, then Chief of HABS, and the team members included architect John N. DeHaas, Jr. (Montana State University), Project Supervisor, Mary Ellen Wietczykowski--now Mary Ellen Young--(Milwaukee Landmarks Commission), Project Historian, and student architects Larry Hermsen (Iowa State University), Roger Little (Kansas University), Thomas Sanford (Washington State University), and Donna Woodrum (Virginia Polytechnic Institute). The drawings were edited by HABS architect John Burns and the data prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS editors Carolyn R. Heath, Mary Farrell, Candace Reed and Philip Hamp. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack Boucher.

ADDENDUM TO:  
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HABS WI-252  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

PAPER COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
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Washington, DC 20240-0001